

A
SERIOUS ADDRESS
TO
BELIEVERS ONLY,
ON THE
PREVAILING INFLUENCE OF FASHION;
AND THE PRESENT

Sinful Custom of subscribing to Starve the Poor,

BY WEARING

HAIR POWDER;

NOW PROHIBITED, UNDER A FINE WHICH DEFILES
THE CONSCIENCE,

By obliging the Wearer WILFULLY to contribute to the present
four-thong'd Scourge of Man,

Ambition, Oppression, War, & Famine!

WRITTEN BY MICHAEL NASH,
THE CHIEF OF SINNERS SAVED.

L O N D O N:

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SERIOUS ADDRESS,

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My dear Brethren in Christ,

IF a man that is healed of a grievous disease, which the whole world labours under, is fit to speak of the cure, to the honour of the physician by whom he is restored, and invite others to come to him and be healed, I have some pretensions to the liberty I take, in addressing these few pages to my dear brethren, who are members with me of one living head, Christ Jesus our LORD; who assures us in 1 Corin. vi. 19th and 20th verses, that we are not our own, for he hath bought us with a price—even that of making his own soul an offering for our sins, that we by his stripes might be healed of every sickness, and every soul disease. And hence he requires us to “glorify God in our bodies and in our spirits, which are God’s;” or, as Paul words it in xiith Rom. 1 and 2, “I beseech you therefore, brethren, *by the mercies of God*, that ye present your *bodies* a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, as your reasonable service; and *be not conformed* to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and

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acceptable,

acceptable, and perfect will of God:" by walking in obedience to him who hath redeemed us from the bondage of sin and death, and brought us into the liberty of the children of God. And who, when he was about to part with us here to take possession for us of an inheritance above, most earnestly, affectionately, and pathetically prayed his Father, that we who were not then in his visible fold might be kept from the evil of the world. And does not every sincere child of God and servant of Christ most heartily join in that prayer with their whole souls? I can speak for myself, that in hunger I never desired food more ardently, or in extreme thirst longed for refreshing fluids, than my soul has earnestly panted to be such a partaker of the blessings contained in that prayer of our dear Lord, that even my whole soul, body, and spirit might be so transformed into the image of Christ, that nothing sensual might remain, if it was his will, and accorded with that state of hourly dependance on him, which is essential to keep the graces of faith, hope, and love alive and vigorous in the soul while dwelling in these tents of Kedar.

That I was born in sin, and infected above most (if not all) men with that loathsome disease of a universal conformity to the world, in speech, manners, habits, and principles, some who knew me early in life can testify. And though I am willing to allow Mr. Huntingdon and some others the exalted title of *Sinner Saved*, yet I must claim the pre-eminence, beyond the power of confutation, and assert, I am the CHIEF of sinners saved.

And

And though I would be as far from offering my Saviour a compensation for that distinguishing grace as the thief who received the same grace on the cross, yet with the man after God's own heart I am apt to say, when I feel the weight of my obligations, "What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits to me?" Am I herein singular or alone? Does not every redeemed soul, when set at liberty from thralldom and walking in the joy of their Lord, feel a similar emanation of love? though perhaps, like me, they may often express it in incoherent words, under the embarrassment of the overflowings of his heart being too great for the narrow channel of articulation. Several scripture instances confirm my query, and I have no doubt but many a precious soul, unpopular in the world or in the church, has so eaten of his apples, and drank of his flagons, till they have been thus divinely inebriated with the spirit of his love.

It is to such, or those only who have tasted that the Lord is gracious, and feel the name of Jesus precious to their souls, that I am now writing. All others are as unstable as water, therefore they cannot excel. The formalists, the hypocrites, and the abandoned world, I have nothing to do with—they are, like Pharaoh, lords over themselves; they know not Jesus of Nazareth for their Lord, neither will they regard him; but whatsoever appears right in their eyes that will they do, without any regard to the word of God, or the welfare of man. It is those only within the Church of Christ that christians are to judge. "God judgeth them that are without, and he is angry with

the wicked every day." How many among those three classes are contained in that sweet speech of our dear Lord's—"Other sheep I have which are not of this fold," &c. no man knoweth; but this we know, that when they, or any of them are brought into this fold under one shepherd, their whole conduct and deportment becomes amenable to the fold, measured by the word of that blessed one shepherd. Nor can any of the sheep who are truly washed from their filthiness wilfully lay down in the dirt and wallow in the mire; unless it be in the dark: and so fearful are they of defilement, and so jealous of themselves, knowing the propensities of the old man (who though subdued is not renewed) that with an old experienced pilgrim they are often crying, "Examine me, O Lord, and prove me; try my reins and my heart, for thy *loving kindness is before mine eyes*: I will walk in thy truth, and not set with vain persons, neither will I go with dissemblers, for I hate the congregation (or company) of evil doers, and will not set with the wicked," &c. We may add—Neither will I imitate them any longer in speech, manners, habits, or principles. Let the time past suffice, wherein I have, in these things, wrought the will of the flesh, since I am now redeemed from the world and my vain conversation therein, I can most sincerely adopt the language of a heathen poet, as well to my vain habits as my self-righteousness, and say—

"What was my pride is now my shame,

"And shall be turn'd to hate."

If this is the pure language of thy soul, Reader, when you understand that conformity to the world is displeasing to your Lord and Master—injurious to the life of faith, hope, and love in your own soul—a stumbling-block to the ungodly, and an occasion of offence to your weak brethren in Christ, I am persuaded, if you feel your deliverance from the law in your members which war against the law of the mind, and your heart thankful for that deliverance, you will imitate your dear brother Paul, and say, if meat or hair-powder, fashions and vain customs make my brother to offend, I will use them no more while the world standeth. Now then let us bring our coin, the Act with all its actuating motives, and weigh them in this nice and never-varying balance of the sanctuary—

“ Whatsoever is not of faith, is sin.”

Here, I think, none will be so hardy or barefaced as to try this sacred beam with such sounding brass and tinkling cymbals as all those vain excuses and subterfuges which are urged by carnal professors, in pleading for their powdered heads, and whatever sinful habits they choose to indulge. No! conscious of their lightness in this scale, they will endeavour to divert us from the trial by weighing *other men and other things*, till their own sin and vanity seem to be lost, or quite overlooked, through their attention to the deficiency of others. Hence, instead of honestly trying the sterling worth of their own arguments, or rather excuses, they will tell us, “ There is as much hypocrisy
and

and dissimulation in those who do not wear powder and follow fashions as those who do—That there is no real religion in any kind of dress whatever—That external things are mere bodily exercise which profit but little—That religion is in the heart, and not in any outward habits or manners.”

The first excuse admits the charge, and only includes others in a different form with themselves. The second is a subtle evasion of scripture, see 1 Pet. iii. 2, 3, where you may see, as well as in other portions of the sacred word, that though there is no religion in dress, yet our obedience to the Gospel requires a certain deportment both in habit and manners, answerable to the disciples of Jesus Christ, and not after the world. The third, though true, does not supersede the fact—that a real internal change, or the in-dwelling of the spirit of Christ, produces an external change expressive of the soul's internal desire to serve and please his new master in all things. The fourth leads me to a serious enquiry what religion is.

It is a word very familiarly used, but little understood. Every sect has its religion, and there are but two out of them all whose principles of action accord with their profession. The word being compound, I conceive it to have been composed originally thus—*rely-gi* or *jah-on*; that is, *Reliance on Jehovah, God*. The gospel of Jesus Christ, as the means by which rebellious sinners are brought to that reliance, I pass over; and taking it only in this point of view, that real religion is neither more nor less than a sincere confidential

fidential reliance on that God which the professor
 pretends to trust in. I say, there are only two
 sects in all the earth that act by principles answer-
 able to their profession, viz. those who worship
 Mammon, and they that trust truly in the living
 God. Each are really alike actuated by the smiles
 or frowns of their distinct deities. If the world
 favours the former with its gifts and smiles, their
 capacity of happiness is as full as it can possibly
 contain; if it frowns and blasts their earthly views,
 they know no greater degree of wretchedness.
 Just so it is exactly with the real Christian living
 in the constant habit of faith: while the Lord
 shines in upon his soul, nothing that men or devils
 can do to him can damp his joy; and if he seems
 to frown upon him, not all that earth can give can
 replace the loss. They are also both equally
 anxious to please or serve their several masters:
 whatever is proposed to them, the first enquiry is,
 Will it please or offend my God? If the servant
 of the world is urged to any civil or religious
 act, and his mind ever so convinced of its moral
 and natural good, yet if he apprehends the least
 offence to the world by doing it, or that it will
 undervalue him but one thought among his fa-
 miliars, he will forbear, at the risk of perpetual
 reproaches from within. And by the same prin-
 ciple the man whose trust is ONLY in the Lord,
 will put at defiance every consideration that clashes
 with his desire to please him who hath called him.
 They will also equally boast of what they hold as
 their chief good. While the man of the world
 exults in his honours, titles, or wealth, the true
 servant

servant of Christ joyfully says, " My soul shall make her boast in the Lord ; and the humble shall hear thereof and be glad." And they differ only in this particular, viz. the worldling being only of the flesh, has but one principle, consequently knows no internal conflict but that of jarring passions ; while the man of God, possessed of two opposing principles—flesh and spirit, is like a city in the centre of two armies, torn with intestine broils. The flesh, by its earthly and sensual desires, is perpetually lusting against the spirit ; and the spirit, being a divine principle, as resolutely opposes it, and is determined to have the dominion : and thus they both will fight till one expires.

But to return to those four cited objections, and meet them on their own ground ; we will suppose them all to be united into one solid truth : what do they amount to ? Not a syllable or even a letter towards proving that conformity to the world is pleasing to God ; and if not pleasing to him it cannot be in faith ; and " without faith it is *impossible* to please him." Neither is it *edifying* or pleasing to the children of God, who are enjoined in Rom. xv. " Not to please themselves ; but every one to please his neighbour, *for his good to edification.*" None but those who are in Christ are included in this exhortation ; nor are any of the evangelical precepts or promises applicable to the children of this world ; for the argument which the Apostle uses to enforce the precept is irrelative to them, viz. " Even as CHRIST pleased not himself." As if he should say, Ye believers,
who

who are all members of one body, so united one to another, that if any one be lacking the body is incomplete, ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please your carnal selves; because Christ, who is sovereign Lord of heaven and earth, and needed not our aid, as we who are strong do the help of the weakest of the flock, pleased not himself, but cheerfully suffered the reproaches due to us to fall on himself. And Paul, by this principle, imitates his Master, where he says, "All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient, because all things edify not." Hence, though with a clear conscience he saw his privilege to eat any meat, without asking what it was sacrificed to, yet he cheerfully refrains from that, and other comfortable privileges, merely to avoid giving offence to the weak brethren; and sweetly exhorting all Christians to follow him as he followed Christ, he says, "Let no man seek his own, but every man another's wealth;" and commands, that whatever they do, they should do all to the glory of God. And in 1 Cor. viii. he shews us plainly, that when we use our liberty as a stumbling-block to our weak brethren, and make them offend, and wound their weak consciences, we sin against Christ.—How aggravated then must the transgression be, when by taking a liberty our master gives us not, we sin thus against them, and cause, as far as we can, our weak brother to perish, for whom Christ died, through our love to the world, or a conceived knowledge of liberty which they see not!

All who read their Bibles will acknowledge, that it is a positive command in Rom. xii. 2. to the children of God, and to them only (there called Brethren,) to be *Nonconformists* to the world. But observation proves the fact, that it is almost universally disobeyed, and even the few that are excepted are esteemed by their brethren as fools or fanatics. The way by which this evangelic precept is become so slighted and neglected as it is at this present day, is similar to the method by which the serpent beguiled Eve, viz. restricting the command to the limits of our carnal ideas and perverse wills. First, they assert, or suppose, that a certain degree of conformity is necessary, if not essential; then the consequence follows, that every man's inclination or situation in life is made the measure of his *tether* of Christian liberty in an unchristian and sinful imitation of the ungodly. Thus, from look to handle, from handle to bite, from bite to taste, and from taste to eat, they (I mean the professed followers of the despised Nazarine,) have gone as far as Eve could go, and swallowed the whole apple; so that now it is as impossible to distinguish a professor of Christ from a servant of Belial, by their outward garb and deportment, as from a sack to pick out two peas that grew in one pod.

But the subject which has again forced me to stand forth in print as an open reprover, contains abundantly more evil than the bare aping of fashion. It is actually a wilful offering of a guinea to the Devil, in the great idol of vanity which he
has

has set up to be worshipped by all nations, and is a shameful and sinful contribution towards countenancing the ungodly, and strengthening the hands of the wicked, murderous, and oppressive sons of Belial: and further, it is in effect such a wilful putting of our hands to the destruction of mankind, and the slaughter of our brethren, as actually defiles their consciences, who do it, with the blood of the slain. And it will not avail any one to say, I do not give it with that view, while they know in their consciences it is raised for that end. Nor will it be an excuse to say other taxes contribute to the same ends; for none are so impartially left to the voluntary act of the will of the donor. Meat, drink, light, and raiment, are the essentials of life; hence every tax upon these is not left to the will, but is an actual extortion taken by force from the consumers. And woe be unto them who extort them for such diabolical purposes.

“ But, (say some,) though we know it is a vanity, we are necessitated to powder, &c. by our dependances and obligations in life. If we did not wear powder at this time we should be deemed an enemy to the state, and our customers or employers would forsake us.”

Before I refute this main plea, let me ask the conscience of the objector before God, if there is any truth in it? Have your customers or employers told you so? No: Then how dare you assert a falsehood upon a mere peradventure which has no existence in facts? As the Lord once sent his rebellious children to the Recabites to reprove

their disobedience to him, so would I send such fearful and unbelieving ones to the Quakers, for a positive refutation of their subterfuge. Are they not almost universally a prosperous flourishing people in business? And does any of their customers withdraw from them because of their nonconformity to the fashions of life? No. Then upon what ground can you erect such a plea, but on the rubbish wherewith you would hide that pride you are ashamed to own; though you know it will one day expose you to shame, and, together with the wood, hay, and stubble you build thereon, be burnt up. But suppose the Quaker's customers should tell him, that unless he forsakes his puritanic habits, and powders his hair, they will withdraw their favours from him, will he do it? I think not. And why? Because no man, says he, is Lord over my conscience. And will the Christian, the man that is dependant on none but the Great Jehovah, sell his conscience cheaper than he sells his goods? To their lasting shame be it spoken, some who call themselves Christians do. If their customers ask for their goods they will not give them without an equivalent return; but if they request them to do that which-defiles the conscience, they will do it without any gratuity—so compliant is the deceitful heart to the creature, and so perverse and rebellious to the Creator.

Now let us meet your plea on the supposition of its being a fact. What is the preponderating conclusion? We must either conform to the world pointedly against the command of the gospel, or
law

law of liberty, by which we are saved, and thus wound our conscience, grieve the spirit, and afflict Christ in his weak members; or we must make up our minds to lose our bread, be despised by the world, and forsaken of all that the flesh holds dear. In this statement, what shall I do? says the believer in Christ. My Lord, who hath redeemed me from the world, and given me an earnest of better things above, assures me I cannot serve two masters of such opposite interests as God and Mammon—that if I love the latter, or its dearest and most lawful enjoyments, such as father and mother, &c. more than him, I am not worthy of him. If I obey the world, it is evident I am the servant of the servants of the world. Which side shall I take? To stand neuter is impossible, though the Devil will persuade us it is not, but that we may hold with both. Well, let me weigh what each can give. The world, if it should smile upon me for the sale of my conscience, I know that all its smiles are insincere, and that those very men who now seem to court my favour, and profess the warmest attachment to my interest, would be the first to forsake me, and stab me with insult, if I should fall into adversity. All the good it has to give, if multiplied by millions, pertaineth only to the body, which, with all its possessions, is to perish in the using.

My soul, now survey the counterpart. Is Christ really mine, and am I his? Then all that he has is mine; he cannot let me perish for lack of bread: besides, his word is pledged to me, that though I may look for tribulation, yea, great tribulation,

bulation, "Bread shall be given me, and my water shall be sure;" and that if I am called to pass through fire, or through water, the one shall not overflow me, nor in the other shall I be burnt; but that, in every state and case, I shall find his grace is sufficient for me: and the honour of Jehovah stands pledged in his word positively "that none of them that trust in him shall be desolate." Psalm xxxiv. 22. And also, That as my day is, so shall my strength of faith be. Since he hath given me the bread that cometh down from heaven, will he deny me the bread from the earth that himself hath appointed for the sustenance of the body? That be far from my sincere, faithful, loving friend! My soul abhors the dishonourable thought, and aspires, in the name and help of my Divine Master, to say,—
 "Avaunt, thou deceitful world! I will no longer be thy servant in body, soul, or spirit, while my Lord will enable me to cast off thy yoke, and disregard thy smiles or frowns, as thou dost, those of my loving Lord. That body of mine, which is become his right through a divine purchase, shall no longer be a slave to your fashions, customs, or principles; but as far as my Lord will condescend to make it, it shall ever be the living temple of the Holy Ghost: its clothing, &c. shall henceforth be a covering of its shame, and means of its warmth, but no more the studied food for its pride. And if you will forsake me, or even persecute me, yea if even my father and mother and dearest familiar friend join with you and forsake me, I know, I say I *know*, that this never-
failing

failing friend, my Lord, will take me up. And beyond all this, I know that what he has in reversion for me as far transcends your greatest gifts as light excels darkness, or as heaven exceeds hell; yea my hope of future joys infinitely outstretches your utmost reach of thoughts. O my Lord, forgive the unbelief that for a moment poised the scale. I am thine—I will be thy servant for ever. Thou hast not only got my ears bored through to thy door-posts, but my heart is riveted to thee by thine own hand; and I only request that in all things thou shouldst do unto thy servant even as thou hast said. Thou sayest that thy grace is sufficient for me, and I firmly believe it. Let me now in this, and in every trial and exercise through the wilderness, sweetly feel thy grace drawing my heart with cheerful love to do whatever is pleasing in thy sight, and avoid every thing which I am not certain thou wilt approve, as pleasing to thee, profitable to my soul, or edifying and beneficial to thy children; and let me no more be conformed to the world, but universally transformed by the renewing of my mind into all the imitable perfections of my dear Lord Jesus Christ."

Is it possible for any sincere soul thus pressed almost out of measure with ardent longings to sacrifice every idol, and all things that offend, to its dear and loving Lord, and yet feel the flesh like a mighty chain, holding of it back? It is possible. What then shall such a one do? Resolve against it? Alas! he may resolve, and re-resolve, with all the conceived powers of human fortitude, yet feel the same shackles still bind his struggling

struggling soul, until his poor heart is rent by the internal fight of flesh and spirit contending, like the belligerent powers, for conquest to gratify their opposite ends, each urged on by warm desire to please their separate masters, God and the world, that like faithful soldiers they will never yield, till one by conquest fairly wins the day. What will he do? Perhaps reason, resolve, watch, and fight, till, wearied in the conflict, his tired spirit seems to flag, and he is ready to conclude that all is lost, and thus bitterly bemoans his wretched state:—"O, (says he,) I would be the Lord's true and faithful servant in all things; for truly my heart is towards the King's highway, but they that have taken me captive *hold me fast*, and *refuse* to let me go." (Jer. l. 33.) Then, lo, just at the critical moment when he is near giving up all, and perhaps has said, "Why should I wait for the Lord any longer?" the Holy Ghost lifts up a standard, and Jesus appears, who is ordained of God to "*build his city, and let go his captives, not for price nor reward*," (Is. xlv. 13.) and thus gently chides his unbelief:---"Did you never read in my word that I had predestinated all whom I call (to be followers of me) to be conformed to mine own image? (Rom. viii. 29.) Wherefore then did you not, when you found the flesh too strong for you, put me to my promises, and give me the honour of fulfilling my word? Do you think I have spoken any thing to my people in vain, or caused them to trust in that which they never receive? Said I not unto you 'My grace is sufficient for you?' Why then did you

you fight so long with your paltry weapons of *Reasons* and *Resolves*? You know the great Leviathan will laugh at the shaking of such spears as those, and esteem them only as rotten wood. Why did you not lay hold of my word, and tell the enemy, that you was not your own—that your body, as well as your soul, was for the Lord—that I had made it my temple—that you had, and ever would give it, and all its concerns, into my hands; and then tell him, if he defiles it, God will destroy him? And why did you not cry to me, My father! my father! see, I beseech thee, my soul's desire is to 'keep under my body;' but the flesh alone is too strong for me? How much more, when aided by the strong man armed? I am thy child, though a weakly one; and if thou sufferest me to be naked, or in rags, or to become 'the reproach of the foolish,' (Psalm xxxix. 8.) the enemy will say, 'Where is now thy God on whom thou dost call?' How shall I answer him? Or what wilt thou do for thy great and holy name? I say, if thou hadst thus come unto me, thou mightest have had peace all the time thou hast been at war; but, be of good cheer, 'I will rebuke Satan under thy feet shortly,' and sweetly incline thine heart to walk in this, and in every way that is pleasing in my sight; so that thy offering or sacrifice shall be a sweet savour to me, the fruit of filial love, and not the servile offering of a slave, which, being wrought by the flesh, and that grudgingly, without the least delight in the spirit, are all earthly, carnal, and sensual. And I will also cause you to learn wisdom and experience

rience by these struggles that ye have suffered; for 'by these things men live, and in all these things is the life of the spirit.' They will teach you, on future occasions, when assaulted by the enemy, and especially when pressed out of measure, not to contend thus with them, but on the first attack to fly unto me as a little child to its parent's arms: be assured I will never fail you, but always succour and defend you so faithfully, that, until your enemy can conquer me, he never shall conquer you, while you take refuge in my arms. And as I have commanded you to abstain from all appearance of evil, so will I sanctify you wholly; and, while you thus live by faith upon me, I will preserve your body, soul, and spirit blameless unto my coming; for I am faithful that calleth you, who also WILL DO IT." (1 Thes. v.)

I cannot think that any argument can possibly go so far with the Christian as the influence of love. If love will not prevail with him, all other arguments, motives, or reasons, will only unite to increase the enmity, shut the mind against conviction, and harden the heart against all other intreaties and admonitions whatever, till the fool is fettered in the stocks, and the rod of correction drives his foolishness far from him, and constrains him to seek wisdom of God, and bow, and kiss the hand that smites him. Various instances stand upon divine record, of God's dear children having their hearts so obdurately bound up with folly; and what has been, may be again; therefore it may not be in vain to meet other arguments of subterfuge,

subterfuge, which do not seem to bear the spots of God's children, but wear the aspect of that palpable dissimulation which characterizes the hypocrites in Zion.

One says, "He cheerfully pays the tax on hair powder because it does not fall on the poor, but is a just distinction between them and the rich."

Who sees not the diabolical foot of pride under this charitable cloak? Let them open their naked deceitful hearts before God, and say, if that distinction would so delight them if their circumstances ranked them among the poor? I am certain it would not. Then let such professors beware how they lie to the Holy Ghost; for with all their pretended concern for the poor, they feel not the least pain at the misery of thousands who are bereft of bread by the Act; nor will their hypocritical charity give that guinea which they thus sinfully offer to their idol, pride, and to promote the most diabolical of all purposes, (War, Oppression, and Famine,) to feed or clothe them.

Another acknowledges the vanity and iniquity of it, but says, "I don't like to be singular, especially at such a time as this."

What is this but a bold declaration, that they will not follow their Master if he leads them through any conspicuous path of obliquity or difficulty? If he and his followers will openly march through the field of scorn and reproach, they will not follow: they know a more pleasant way to obtain their end; for they can truly become all things to all men, and run as fast with a disciple

of Mammon in public, as their tongues can run with the disciples of Christ in private. The Lord's commands, "Be not conformed to the world"—"Come ye out from among them, be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you, and will be a father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord God Almighty"—will suit very well to those poor burdened souls, who are almost distracted lest they should be shut out of Heaven; but as for us, we have the world to mind, and our families to provide for, so that we dare not do any thing that will offend the world, or lessen us in their esteem; for if they frown upon us, who will shew us any good? Are such half-hearted ones meet to be called the Lord's servants? Let them hear the Lord's own word in reply, (Math. x. 38.) "He that *taketh* not his cross and followeth after me, is not worthy of me."

Another professor hypocritically says, "It is a scripture command to pay tribute."

For the real and natural exigencies of the nation it undoubtedly is, and an honest upright man, such as have learned to live with real dependence on the Lord, would always cheerfully contribute his quota, even if there was no tax to enforce it: but when the known and professed purpose for which such a tribute is raised is so diametrically opposite to all humanity, honesty, godliness, or the welfare of the nation, as sowing the hellish seed of civil feuds among brethren in a neighbouring nation, (See *Jordan's Parliamentary Journal*

Journal for April, 1794,) to promote that carnage among themselves which our murderous blades could not perpetrate upon them,—the righteous soul recoils with horror at the infernal deed, and nobly dares to be singular to the utmost extreme. For thus he argues—“ Shall I, who am the servant of Christ, a child of the Eternal God, to indulge my cursed pride wilfully contribute a mite to such brutal and satanical purposes? Shall I, who am the Lord’s steward, and commanded by him to ‘ honour God with my substance,’ give a voluntary guinea, or even a farthing, towards destroying my fellow-creatures, the work of his hands, who made them for his own glory, and not for victims to gratify the brutal rage of infernal furies in human shape?— Yea, rather let me beg my bread all my days, and grudge if I be not satisfied: let me become a horse, a dog, or a toad, rather than so defile my hands and conscience with my brother’s blood, and lend my aid towards increasing the artificial famine already in the land.”

Such taxes as are laid on us by compulsion, I think Christians are bound to submit to, where they cannot avoid it without resisting the ruling powers; because by the compulsion it ceases to be the act of our will, which abhors the deed—just as a highwayman’s pistol may make it prudent for me to give him that which, as a voluntary act, would be injurious to myself and family, and a sinful encouragement of vice and villany.

On a prospective view of the Act, with its concatenated circumstances, through the divine telescope

scope of scripture, I cannot help looking at it (though the human part of the scene is full of blood) as a wise dispensation of God, whereby he seems externally and visibly to sound the alarm more immediately to his professing people, as he has done in all ages, when his sore judgements were about to fall upon any land; and its language is "Who is on the Lord's side, who?" Believers who listen to its import, and wash their heads from the harlot's filth, seem to receive the black mark of scorn and reproach in their foreheads from the writer's inkhorn, as a token that they sigh and cry for all the abominations that are done in the land, wherefore the destroying weapon shall not touch them. (Ezek. ix. 4.) While those who hear not his voice, nor obey the sound, like the worshippers of Baal, who are many, because King Jehu professes to serve him much, receive the idolators discriminating mark in their heads, and put on the fashionable vestments of Baal, which, while they fondly conceive will be their commendation to the King, will probably prove the appointed mark of the Lord's slaughtering weapons, when he shall command them to go through the land.

As for those, professors or profane, who pretend a steady attachment to reform, and can thus meanly and most servilely cover their real sentiments with the dust on their heads, they are below reproof: for whether in or out of power their whole principle of action centres entirely in SELF; and by Solomon's philosophy it is an invariable rule, That, for a piece of bread, such men, in
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whatever they are intrusted, will transgress. (See Prov. xxviii. 21.)

Another, who calls himself the Lord's servant, says, "If I knew it to be a sin, I would not do it." How are you to know it? It is not in the flesh, nor all the power of man, or utmost strength of argument, to convince a soul of sin. This is alone the peculiar prerogative of the Holy Ghost: and this I believe will be acknowledged by such objectors. Now then I call their conscience forth to answer this query—Can you say confidently before God, you *know* it is *not a sin*? No: I am certain they cannot. Then your soul being in doubt, greatly transgresseth, according to Paul's doctrine, Rom. xiv. 23: "He that doubteth is damned (or condemned in his own conscience) if he eat, because he eateth (or powdereth) not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith, is sin." But I ask again, Have you seriously appealed to the Lord the Spirit, and earnestly sought for that conviction of the truth in this matter which the Holy Ghost worketh? No. Then how do you expect to know whether it is sin or not? If your objection was founded on truth, and your desire, to know whether it is sin or not, sincerely upright, you, as a Christian, commit a great sin of negligence in not enquiring of the Lord about it; who, respecting all things that we stand in need of, says, "I will be enquired of by the house of Israel to do those things for them;" though he had before promised to do them: and you know the gospel command is, to pray always, *i. e.* whenever we are in doubt about any thing that respects

respects our duty or obligations of love, or feel any want whatever, it is our privilege and duty to go instantly to the Lord and make our request known to him, wherever we are, or however occupied. But the real truth with such is, (if they are really in Christ,) that honest Conscience knows it to be a sin, but the carnal heart and fleshly desires combine to imprison him, and will not suffer him to speak; or he would plainly tell them, it is manifestly sinful, because not done in faith, and that it is displeasing to God, because they cannot honestly and sincerely give thanks for it before him. Again, such know, and are able also to teach others, the gospel obligation to mortify the deeds of the body, and that if they are truly in Christ they are really no longer debtors to the flesh to live after the flesh, yet palpably condemn themselves in that thing which they allow themselves in; for they dare not deny that it is a sinful indulgence of the flesh in the pride of life, and no ways profitable to the spirit, or in the least degree useful or edifying to others, but quite the contrary; for they know it is a shameful and horrible waste of God's creature, which he ordained for the sustenance of man's body, and not to feed their cursed pride; and that it makes the Lord's simple seeking children to transgress: for it is certain, many sincere Christians who are weak, are, by the example of what *are called* Ministers of the Gospel, and many great and eloquent professors, emboldened to do this, and many things, which their consciences faithfully condemn; and thus these are defiled through their pretended great knowledge

ledge of gospel liberty. A liberty the gospel truly is *from* sin, and its ruling power ; but in no scripture can you find it as they thus make it, a liberty **TO SIN**, because their unfeeling conscience suffers no remorse in the act. Let such duly meditate on the 8th of 1 Cor. especially the 12th verse, where the Apostle assures us that they who sin so against their weak brethren, **SIN AGAINST CHRIST**.

The manufactured parsons or preachers, who plead their privilege to powder by their exemption from the tax, under a certain income, I leave to walk in their own ways, as faithful priests of Baal or Mammon, with whom the gospel precepts have nought to do ; though, to answer their purposes, they call Jesus their master, while they hold fast the law of Moses as their avowed rule of life, which says nothing about conforming to the world, or taking up a cross (out of love to him who hath redeemed our souls) as the law of liberty in Christ does.

Some (I do not say Christians, though attendants on Mr. Cecil,) have been so ignorant and audacious as to plead for their sinful conformity, that they “suppose Christ conformed to the fashions and habits commonly worn in his day,” against the plain and express word of truth, which assures us his coat was without seam, woven throughout, such as I conceive never appeared among men before, since Adam’s transgression. Besides he himself assures us, that neither he nor his disciples were of the world ; and, in proof thereof, cites the world’s hatred of him and them, telling us, that if they were of the world they would be beloved by the world. O that men would learn to

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hold their peace, and not talk about God, or Christ, or religion, till the Holy Ghost has taught them, out of the abundance of his grace in their hearts, to speak right things concerning the King; and then their tongue will be as the pen of a ready writer.

Was I writing to self-righteous people, or what are termed moral honest churchmen, I should adopt other arguments than those of love; because this description of men have certain mental powers which true believers in Christ have not, abstracted from him: as for instance—If the mere moralist has a desire to mortify himself in any external thing that is visible to others, he can presently do it, because the self-approbation he feels by the mental gratification of his pride, in being reputed good, wise, holy, liberal, or just, &c. will stimulate him to do much sacrifice to that secret idol. Nor can he possibly act on any other principle than one vice outweighing another; for, having no assurance, or even a scriptural ground to hope, that God loves him, it is impossible he can feel any love to God, consequently he cannot offer any sacrifice to him. But the poor believer *in* Christ finds no help from that principle. The world's approbation, or a good name among men, affords him no consolation; all his desires are to be approved by his Master, let men think of him what they will. If his Divine Master appoints him any work, honest Conscience, with his goad, urges him on to the performance, and all his puny powers are called forth by a real desire, through love, to obey; but, alas! he soon painfully finds
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his fleshly desires much too strong for all his inherent powers. What is the result? His honest mind, wearied with striving, and sensible of his weakness, yet horribly afraid of being defiled by the uncircumcised, and his soul grieved at the thought of his dishonouring or displeasing his gracious friend, he falls to crying to him who gave the command, for power to obey; and, if he delays to help, he will often remind him of his promise to "work in him to will and to do, of his own good pleasure;" yea, his struggling soul will even go so far as to wrestle with the High and Lofty One who inhabiteth eternity, and tell him, "If thou dost not help me to walk in that path through the wilderness which thyself hath appointed and commanded, the adversary, who seeth me crying daily at thy footstool, will say that my God, in whom I trust, is not able to carry me through this great wilderness into the goodly land, as thou hast promised." Thus the poor lame believer takes the prey, and though he feels contemptible in his own eyes as a worm, "As a prince he finds power with God and prevails." Then he does not, like the moralist, say I can do, or have done, so and so, but ascribes all the glory to his heavenly Father, and with holy exultation cries, "The Lord hath done great things for me, whereof I am glad."

O that the Lord would suddenly come to his temple! that the salvation of Israel would now come down again upon Zion, and give power to his saints, even the weakest of his flock, thus to wrestle with him, that there might be something

like the substance of faith found in the earth when the Son of Man cometh !

If we take a moralist that is proud of the name of Philanthropos, and piques himself upon his feelings of humanity, his love of justice, peace, equity, and piety, and convince him, that the custom of wearing hair powder, in a time of such extreme scarcity as the present, wherein thousands perish with hunger that might be supported by the quantity of fine wheat which is profusely wasted in that cursed vanity, is contributing to their distress, and this argument alone will induce him to leave it off: And further, if you make him understand that the guinea he pays for his LIBERTY to waste, it is collected for and appropriated to the destruction of mankind, by war and famine, his heart will rise with indignation at such brutal, ungodlike, and diabolical principles ; and he would sooner scatter his substance to the wind, than give it to such fatanical purposes.

And, has the Christian a privilege to do what morality and common honesty forbid, and human nature shudders at? No.—Then let all such as will thus subscribe their voluntary guinea to that great idol, vanity, and contribute so much to promote the destruction of their own brethren, disclaim all pretensions to that highest name of man, *A Christian*. And if they will still hold that sacred and exalted name, while they have the audacity and impudence thus openly to avow their ungodly attachment to the world, and thus wickedly do sacrifice to the accursed idol, in the name of
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our God, and by the aid of his spirit, may every true and faithful servant of Christ as courageously set his face against them, and according to Apostolic order, "From such withdraw themselves, and have no fellowship with them, not so much as to eat with them: No, but rather reprove them;" and thus, by word and deed, wash our hands from their iniquity, by shewing our abhorrence of all such abominable, bloody, and deceitful principles. And let us leave the fawning hypocrites in Zion to light a candle to the Devil, and hold in secret right sentiments that they dare not openly avow.

If those who call Christ their Master, and pretend to have their trust in God, will, after such admonitions, still strive vilely and publicly to serve the Mammon of Unrighteousness, let us plead in secret with the Lord against them, as those stumbling-blocks in Zion, which make the Lord's people to transgress; of whom Paul says, "I would they were even cut off that trouble you."

It is more than probable that some of my friends will feel extremely hurt by these pages, and be highly offended with the Author for publishing them; but I cannot help it. If I should seek only to please men, I could not be the servant of Christ; and though I sensibly feel the obligations wherewith they have bound me to them, as a strong cord, yet when their pleasure stands in competition with my Saviour's honour, and his people's good, to edification, I cannot, I dare not

not give such place to my knowledge of men after the flesh, as wilfully to desert his cause, for fear of displeasing any man, or even sacrificing my own temporal advantage. But this I know—if they love the Lord in truth, whose servant I am, they will love the man who smites them in his name, and will, like David, esteem the reproof an excellent oil.

The thoughts of writing and publishing these hints have these two months laid with weight on my mind, but have been omitted through the urgency and multiplicity of temporal and domestic avocations, and which I have often felt a desire to make an excuse for declining the task; especially when I heard that a Minister of Jesus Christ had it in contemplation to take up the subject, I thought myself fairly exempted from the painful task of coming forth again to the world as a reprovcr in the gate. But the Lord having moved that person from these parts to labour in his vineyard for some time in the North, I knew not how to excuse myself any longer, conscience having, for many days, smitten me with this reproach, viz. you can find time to work for yourself, who are not your own, while my work, whose servant you are, is wholly untouched. Thus rebuked from day to day, it was impossible to forbear any longer.

Let me but see my Master's hand sealing this work of his unworthy and dilatory servant to the profit and edification of his children, and I shall be abundantly satisfied for my labour. As for pecuniary

pecuniary profit, I look for none from it, however men may accuse me ; for I have strictly devoted whatever it may produce by the sale of it, after the real expence of printing, &c. is discharged, to those poor who hunger for the bread that the powdered heads deprive them of.

I hope that no one who may have previous to, or in consequence of this publication forsook that vanity, will reason himself into a persuasion that he is a Believer in Christ because he has done so. No.—Let men beware how they offer the sacrifice of fools. The Lord reapeth not his fields, nor dresseth his vineyard, by the labour of other men's servants : he asketh no labour of love, but from his own children. If you have not, previous to your sacrifice, a well-grounded hope that your person is accepted by him, forbear to offer it on any other altar than mere *moral suasion* of civil right and wrong, lest, like Cain, your person and offering be rejected together.

To all that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity and truth, and manifest their love by their obedience to the law of liberty and love, which teaches the servants of Christ to forbear even lawful things, when inexpedient, rather than give an occasion of offence to the weakest of his flock ; to such, I say, my heart glows with genial warmth when and wherever I can discern it, whether they be poor or rich ; and to them my affections are united, as children with me of the same Father, and brother to a real member of Christ, who, from a deep sense of his immense weight of guilt, and most aggravating and accumulated

cumulated sins and transgressions, which are all most freely and fully pardoned, is obliged to style himself,

*The very chiefest of Sinners saved,
And Servant of the Servants of his Lord,*

MICHAEL NASH.

July 8, 1793.

P. S. I have since heard of some who plead in their defence the Lord's command to anoint the head, &c. not considering, that anointing has been a custom from the beginning, and, in warm climates, is essential to health; as well to prevent profuse perspiration, as to repel the damps which the natives are liable to, from their habits of sitting and lying on the ground.

Others say, the quantity used cannot increase the scarcity, and reckon only one pound per head annually. But I know a hair-dresser who avers, that in common he used one pound on one person at each dressing; and that he once put four pounds and a half in one head at once, and another dresser used five pounds at one dressing. And the newspapers have asserted, that the consumption of wheat for hair-powder and starch amounted to one-twentieth part of the whole produce.

Be that as it may, such cavillers are not requested to offer any sacrifice to the Lord, until they have first given themselves up to him, and then he will lead them into all truth.

FINIS.